

# Artificial Turf / Crumb Rubber Update

October 6, 2015



**Safe Fields Alliance**

## Safe Fields Alliance

- The Safe Fields Alliance is a coalition dedicated to educating stakeholders around the safety of synthetic turf fields using crumb rubber.



Safe Fields Alliance

## Overview

- State of the Industry
- Science & Testing
- Proliferation of alternatives
- Working with other Government Agencies
- Wrap Up

Safe Fields Alliance

EPA Meeting

## STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

Safe Fields Alliance

## Media

- **NBC Report(s)**
  - “Links” artificial turf / crumb rubber to a possible “cluster” of cancer in soccer goalies at U. Washington, Seattle.
  - Numerous, similar, local news reports (all mention same possible cluster)
- **USA Today Article**
  - Highlights concerns over lead in turf / crumb rubber
- **San Francisco Chronicle**
  - “Critics say EPA played dual role in recycled tire controversy”

  
Safe Fields Alliance

## Impact on the Public

- Growing concerns around safety – parents, teachers, coaches, and athletes are worried that children will get cancer if they play on these fields; some parents refuse to let their children participate in outdoor sports on these fields.
- Needless taxpayer expense for ripping up replacing good, functional, safe, playing fields, playgrounds, and parks

  
Safe Fields Alliance

EPA Meeting

## SCIENCE & TESTING

Safe Fields Alliance

### State of Connecticut Department of Public Health (CT DPH) (January 2015)

*"CT DPH finds **no scientific support** for a finding of elevated cancer risk from inhalation or ingestion of chemicals derived from recycled tires used in artificial turf fields. . . .*

*The current news reports of a list of soccer players with cancer **does not constitute a correlation or casualty** and thus raises a concern that lack scientific support. . . .*

*Thus, the CT DPH position expressed in 2011 at the conclusion of the Connecticut study, that **outdoor artificial fields do not represent an elevated health risk** remains unchanged."*


Safe Fields Alliance

**State of Massachusetts  
Department of Public Health**

(March 2015)

*"The scientific literature continues to suggest that exposure opportunities to artificial turf fields are **not generally expected to result in health effects.** Testing results on the crumb rubber infill indicated **lead content less than CPSIA statutory limits** established for children's products.*


*Available information on the occurrence of cancers in children living in Medway indicates **no diagnoses of Hodgkin Lymphoma, NHL, or osteosarcoma have been reported from 2006 to the present.** The fact that there are no reports of such cancers is reassuring."*

 Safe Fields Alliance

**Laura C. Green, Ph.D., D.A.B.T.**

*"I find **no reliable basis** for the notion that crumb rubber in-filled synthetic turf fields pose a significant risk of cancer. **Several groups of investigators, from academia, government, and consulting firms,** have performed environmental monitoring and/or modeling studies of crumb rubber and synthetic turf fields, and have **reached the same conclusion.**"*

*(March 2015)*

 Safe Fields Alliance


## CalRecycle / OEHHA

- CalRecycle has committed \$2.4 million for a first phase study to begin this fiscal year.
- Cal OEHHA (Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment) will perform the study: will test crumb rubber leaching, bioavailable chemicals, and chemicals vaporized when rubber is heated.
- Other study-phases may take into consideration concerns of SB 47 and other interests.

 Safe Fields Alliance

## Synthetic Turf Council Releases Guidelines for Testing Infill in Synthetic Turf Fields

- The Synthetic Turf Council (STC) recently announced environmental guidelines for testing metals content of crumb rubber and other infills used in synthetic turf sports and recreation fields. The STC Environmental Guidelines for Infill are designed to add another level of information for parents, players, owners and operators of synthetic turf fields.
- The STC selected European Testing Standard EN 71-3, which sets strict limits for heavy metals in children's toys.
- The new infill guidelines add to seven *other* guidelines developed over the years by the synthetic turf industry.

 Safe Fields Alliance



EPA Meeting

## **ALTERNATIVES TO RUBBER**

 Safe Fields Alliance


### **Alternatives**

- Pressure to eschew crumb rubber infill for:
  - “Organics,” such as coconut husk and cork
  - Virgin thermoplastic elastomers (TPE)
  - “Nike Grind”
- Tradeoffs:
  - Higher costs
  - Irrigation required
  - Unproven performance / history
  - Possibly poorer shock absorption properties

 Safe Fields Alliance


EPA Meeting

## **WORKING WITH OTHER AGENCIES**

 Safe Fields Alliance

### **U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission**

- We met with CPSC Chairman Kaye on July 20, 2015, and earlier in the year with Commissioners and staff, to share relevant technical information regarding the health and safety of synthetic turf and crumb rubber.
- We asked CPSC to reaffirm its 2008 statement on the safety of synthetic turf.
  - They have yet to do so . . .
- We pledged to maintain communication with key CPSC personnel.

 Safe Fields Alliance



### **Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR)**

- Shared current scientific studies and resources.
- Offered to meet with new ATSDR director to provide agency with up-to-date studies and resources that will enable effective coordination with other Federal agencies.
- Offered to participate in any future studies on health and environmental impact of crumb rubber.

  
Safe Fields Alliance

### **U.S. Congress -- Briefings**

- Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government, House Appropriations Committee, Majority Minority Staff.
- Representative Sanford Bishop (D-GA)
- Representative Tom Graves (R-GA)
- House Energy and Commerce Committee, Majority and Minority staff.
- Senator Johnny Isakson (R-GA)

  
Safe Fields Alliance

### **Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASHTO)**

- Briefed ASHTO on our ongoing efforts with EPA, CPSC, ATSDR and other Federal Agencies;
- Presented scientific studies on turf and crumb rubber;
- Requested ASHTO affirm that turf and crumb rubber pose no significant risk to public health.
  - They seemed reluctant to do so . . . Explaining that their mandate is instead to *work for their members*, who are State toxicologists and other public health officials . . .

Safe Fields Alliance

### **2016 Department of the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies, Appropriations Bill**

- *"Artificial Turf.* – The Committee is aware of EPA's previous studies on artificial turf and infill products, and its most recent work with the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials to further define the safety of these products. The Committee encourages the Agency to provide guidance about the safety of crumb rubber in artificial turf."

Safe Fields Alliance

EPA Meeting

## **WRAP UP**

 Safe Fields Alliance

### **Collaboration with EPA**

The synthetic turf industry wishes to collaborate with U.S. EPA and other Federal agencies to generate and provide scientific data regarding the risks and benefits of crumb rubber and synthetic turf for the U.S. population.

We support EPA's desire to beneficially re-use waste tires throughout the nation.

 Safe Fields Alliance

## Wrap Up

- We request a clear message from EPA with respect to the safety of crumb rubber and artificial turf.
- We suggest something like: *"U.S. EPA began conducting studies of artificial turf and crumb rubber in 2008. Based on our and others' research, we find that synthetic turf and crumb rubber pose no significant risk to public health or the environment, and that crumb rubber is a beneficial use of recycled tires."*